

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, ETRN, ID

SUBJECT: BURMAH TANKERS

1. JUNE 16 NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE REPORTS DECISION BY ALGONQUIN GAS TRANSMISSION COMPANY (MASSACHUSETTS) AND PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTRIC AND GAS COMPANY (NEW JERSEY) TO TERMINATE THEIR JOINT VENTURE, KNOWN AS EASCOGAS LNG INC, WHICH HAD PLANNED TO IMPORT ALGERIAN LNG. EASCOGAS CONTRACT WITH ALGERIAN GAS COMPANY, SONATRACH, HAD REQUIRED FPC AUTHORIZATION FOR PROJECT BY MAY 31. THE TWO UTILITIES JUDGED THAT PROBLEMS PRESENTED TO FPC BY THEIR APPLICATION WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE RESOLVED TO FPC'S SATISFACTION AND THEREFORE DETERMINED NOT TO SEEK EXTENSION OF DEADLINE. NEW JERSEY UTILITY HAS BOUGHT OUT ALGONQUIN'S SHARE OF EASCOGAS AND MAY TRY TO MAKE A SEPARATE CONTRACT WITH SONATRACH FOR SMALLER VOLUME OF GAS IMPORTS.

2. AT SAME TIME, ESCOGAS' CONTRACT WITH BURMAH OIL
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TANKERS LTD ALSO CANCELLED. FIRST OF THREE LNG TANKERS BUILT FOR THIS TRADE HAS BEEN DELIVERED -- THE AQUARIUS, TO WHOSE LAUNCHING AMBASSADOR RUSMIN WAS INVITED AND WHICH HAS BEEN PLACED TEMPORARILY IN BADAQ-JAPAN TRADE. NET EFFECT OF EVENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE MAY POSSIBLY BE PERMANENT

ASSIGNMENT OF AQUARIUS AND TWO UNDELIVERED EASCO TANKERS,

NOW A-BUILDING AT GENERAL DYNAMICS' QUINCY YARD, TO THE
CHEROKEE SERVICE BETWEEN INDONESIAN AND JAPAN.ONE OR MORE
OF THREE TANKERS MIGHT ALSO BE REASSIGNED TO ALGERIA-
NEW JERSEY TRADE UNDER A NEW EASCOGAS-SONATRACH CONTRACT).

3. LNG TANKER HILLI, IN ABU DHABI-JAPAN TRADE AND OWNED
BY INTERNATIONAL UTILITIES, HAS BEEN STEAMING IN INTER-
NATIONAL WATERS OFF JAPAN FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS TRYING TO
WORK CERTAIN UNKNOWN METAL OBJECTS OUT OF ITS LNG
STORAGE TANKS WITHOUT ALLOWING ITS CARGO TO VAPORIZE.
OBJECTS WERE HEARD RATTLING AROUND WHEN HILLI BEGAN DIS-
CHARGING ITS CARGO AT A JAPANESE PORT, FORCING SHIP TO
CEASE DISCHARGING AND HEAD FOR HIGH SEAS. VANCE

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